

AN ADDRESS
TO THE
MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND,

AND
TO PROTESTANT TRINITARIANS
IN GENERAL,

EXHORTING THEM TO TURN FROM THE FALSE
WORSHIP OF

THREE PERSONS,
TO THE WORSHIP OF
THE ONE TRUE GOD.

"YE WORSHIP YE KNOW NOT WHAT." JOHN IV. 22.

THE SECOND EDITION.

L O N D O N:

PRINTED FOR J. JOHNSON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD,
AND SOLD BY ALL THE BOOKSELLERS IN
CAMBRIDGE AND CANTERBURY.

MDCCLXXXVIII

[PRICE TWO-PENCE.]

MEMBER OF ENGLAND
without an equal
and without a doubt
Gibbons.

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 IN GENERAL

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 WORSHIP OF

THE TRINITY



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**AN ADDRESS
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TO PROTESTANT TRINITARIANS
IN GENERAL.**

BRETHREN,

PERMIT me to address you on a subject of the greatest importance to a sincere believer in Christ. I observe that many of you, every seventh day, frequent some place set apart for religious worship. You there profess to offer up prayers to the Being who created the world. Whatever may be the laws or customs of your different places of worship, you presume that they are founded on the holy scriptures. Any thing contrary to those scriptures, ought not, you think, to be admitted into your worship. Surely then it behoves you at all times to examine your opinions, to see whether you are really and truly worshipping the true God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, or a phantom of your own imaginations.

Are you then worshippers of God, or not? It is a serious question. Let me persuade you to give it a moment's consideration. The words which Christ used, in answer to a Jewish enquirer after the first commandment of the law, may assist you in your thoughts. "Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord; and thou shalt love

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"the

“ the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with
 “ all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all
 “ thy strength : this is the first commandment *.”
 I bring you to this test ; do you really worship
 that God, of whom Christ speaks, or do you not ?
 If you do not, Christ himself bears witness against
 you, that you are not his disciples. To know,
 whether you do, or do not, despise your saviour,
 you must consider who God is, of whom Christ
 speaks.

Before I examine this point, let me observe to
 you what I have seen or heard in your places of
 worship. In the established churches, a form of
 prayer is used, in which are the following words ;
 —O God the Son, redeemer of the world—O God
 the Holy Ghost—O holy, blessed, and glorious
 Trinity, three persons and one God, have mercy
 upon us miserable sinners—O Lord Jesus Christ,
 have mercy upon us ; and, in many similar pas-
 sages, prayers are addressed to Jesus Christ, to the
 Holy Ghost, and to the Trinity. In most also of
 the places of worship belonging to the Dissenters,
 prayers are offered up to Jesus Christ, to the Holy
 Ghost, and to the Trinity.

Now, brethren, if Jesus Christ be not God, if
 the Holy Ghost be not God, if the Trinity be not
 God, you are guilty of a breach of Christ's com-
 mandments in praying to them ; and if you pray
 to all these, you err grievously, for Jesus Christ
 tells us, that the Lord our God is one Lord ; to
 which great truth Moses, the prophets, and the
 apostles, bear witness. You worship, alas ! other
 gods than the true God, forgetting what is said in
 the scriptures, “ Thou shalt not bow down to
 them, nor worship them.”

* Mark xii. 29.

Of whom then did Christ speak? the words are taken from Deut. 6th chap. 4th ver. and literally translated are, "Jehovah our God is one Jehovah." Jehovah is the name, by which God made himself known to Moses; Jehovah created the heavens and the earth; Jehovah called Abraham—spake to Moses—revealed himself to the prophets—was worshipped by the jewish nation. Throughout the whole of the old Testament, Jehovah declares himself to be one; and that there is no other God beside him: the children of Israel, while they obeyed him, worshipped him as the one and only true God; and when they mixed with the worship of Jehovah that of idols, they were brought to their senses by severe punishments. When Christ preached to the jews, Jehovah was the object of their worship; of him also Christ bears witness; namely, that Jehovah is the only true God, that there is no one good but him*; that he is his God and Father †; that Jehovah his Father is greater than he ‡.

These few passages of scripture are; I should think, sufficient to convince an unprejudiced mind, that they who offer up prayers to Jesus Christ, to the Holy Ghost, or to the Trinity, are highly criminal: but since you have formed for yourselves, without any grounds from scripture, such fanciful gods, let us consider each of them separately:

First. Of *Jesus Christ*. Jesus Christ, says an apostle to the jews, "was a man approved of God among you by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him, in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: him, being delivered

* Matt. xix. 17.

† Matt. xi. 25. John xx. 17.

‡ John xiv. 28.

“ delivered by the determinate counsel and fore-
 “ knowledge of God, ye have taken, and by
 “ wicked hands have crucified and slain : whom
 “ God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of
 “ death*.” Again, “ this Jesus hath God raised
 “ up, whereof we all are witnesses † :—and there-
 “ fore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly,
 “ that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye
 “ have crucified, both Lord and Christ ‡.” I
 have selected these passages out of many others,
 because they give a plain account of our saviour.
 There is a clear distinction between God and
 Christ. Christ performed wonders, but it was by
 the power of God,—by God’s permission he was
 delivered into the hands of the jews and slain—it
 was God that raised up Christ from the dead—it
 was God that made him Lord and Christ,

How then say ye, in exprefs contradiction to
 scripture, and to common sense, that Jesus Christ
 is God; making no difference between the great
 Being, who sent, and the man who was sent—
 between him, who knoweth all things, and the
 man, who declared, that he did not know all
 things §—between him, who is the God and Fa-
 ther of Jesus Christ, and that same Jesus, who
 declared that his Father was greater than he ||.

Consult common sense. Could God lie in the
 womb of a woman? could God expire on the
 cross? could God be buried in the grave? Shock-
 ing suppositions! Brethren, examine for your-
 selves. Let no man deceive you, by a specious
 humility, to give worship to any, but the one true
 God, for “ thou shalt worship him alone ¶.”

Secondly,

* Acts ii. 22—24.

† Acts ii. 32.

‡ Acts ii. 36.

§ Matt. xxiv. 36.

|| John xiv. 28.

¶ Matt. iv. 10.

Secondly. *Of the Holy Ghost.* Our forefathers supposed, and, at the present day, ignorant people in many countries suppose, that a man consists of two different substances, one, which we can see and feel; the other, a substance not to be felt. When a man died, they supposed, that these two substances were separated one from the other. The body was conveyed to the ground, and the ghost, for so they called the other substance, hovered about the place. Hence a number of idle tales are told about ghosts in church-yards; and it was said of a man dying, that he gave up the ghost. The papists have not failed to make use of this foolish tale to very bad purposes, for they say, that the ghost is tormented for many years, in a place called by them purgatory. The greek word in the scriptures, which means spirit, or wind, or breath, is frequently translated by this word "ghost." But wherever it is so translated, it is applied to God, in the same manner, as the spirit of a man is to a man. When you say, such a man's spirit is gentle or untameable, you do not mean, that the man and his spirit are different persons. Neither ought you, when speaking of God, to say, that God and his Spirit are different persons. Your addresses to the Holy Ghost have no foundation in scripture, and they are strictly prohibited by the first commandment, "thou shalt have none other gods but me."

Thirdly. *Of the Trinity.* Trinity is a latin word, not to be found in the scriptures. The notion, annexed to it in your creed, of three persons, each of whom is God, making but one God, is rank nonsense. And will you, my brethren, enter into the presence of God, pretend to worship him, and yet give him a name, the invention of idle and wicked

wicked disputers. Reflect—there is but one God, and his name is one, and his glory will he not give to another.

Perhaps you will reply to me, that I have selected those passages only, which favour my opinion, and have neglected others, which prove Jesus Christ to be God. It is sufficient for me to observe, that the scripture cannot contradict itself. The passages by which you have been deluded, (and I also once was deceived through the prejudices of birth, of education, and of habit) to believe Christ to be God, will be found, on examination, to convey no such meaning. Search the scriptures. Point out one single passage, in which Jesus Christ declared himself to be God. Point out one, in which the apostles declared him to be God. In a matter of such importance, it is not proper for you, to infer from this or that passage, ill explained, that he is God: but as he expressly declares himself to be inferior to God, believe his words; and, as he commands, worship the Father in spirit and in truth.

Perhaps you will say, that many pious and learned men have died in your faith. Such men are also to be found, among catholics, among heathens. Yet you will not say, that the romish religion is true, or that idols are to be worshipped.

Perhaps you think it sufficient to follow, without enquiry, the religion of your fathers. Had your fathers in succession done the same, what would now be the religion of this country? Three centuries ago, they were immersed in ignorance and popery; some centuries farther back, they were gross idolaters. On this principle, Jesus Christ and his apostles would have had no hearers. Be not

not deceived, brethren, religion is a personal concern—the Bible is open before you—from thence you are to form your opinions, not from the notions of your fathers, or the custom of the times.

Perhaps you will say, you are ignorant, and these things are mysteries, Brethren, to whom did Christ preach? was it not to the poor? was it not to the unlearned? were not his disciples from the lowest of the people? did the great men, did any of the rulers or the pharisees believe on him*? The present times are like those in which Christ preached. The rich and learned are not more likely to become his disciples now, than formerly. As to the mysteries you talk of, remember that mystery means something hid; revelation means the discovery of that, which was hidden, and unknown†. There are no mysteries in the religion of Jesus Christ: his gospel is plain, simple, and clear. Even the “mystery of iniquity,” which began to work in the apostles’ time, and now works, and keeps in bondage the nations of Europe, is sufficiently known, to every enquiring mind,

You will say, perhaps, that by adopting my notions of the true God, you will lose the benefit of social worship. The seven thousand men, who refused to bend their knees to Baal, did not, you may be sure, worship in the temples of Baal. Social worship is a very desirable thing; but for the sake of social prayer, I cannot worship an idol. Brethren, I call you from false objects of worship, to the worship of the living God. If any one, who reads this address, believes with me, that there is one God only, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, I call on him to forsake the temples, where they have set up other objects of worship.

* John vii. 48.

† Mark iv. 23. Col. i. 26.

worship. To the rest, I say with the apostle, examine yourselves, prove your own selves, whether you be in the faith; and if your enquiry leads you to this great truth, that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is the only true God, I say to you, with the scriptures,

WORSHIP HIM ALONE.

W. FRIEND.

*Jesus College, Cambridge,
Sept. 10, 1788.*

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You will say perhaps, that by allowing my devotion of the true God, you will lose the benefit of local worship. The answer I would give you is, that I am not at all concerned to be told, that you may be true, worship in the temple of your heart. Local worship is a very doubtful thing; but for the sake of local prayer, I cannot worship in a local temple. I call you from false objects of worship, to the worship of the true God. If any one who reads this address, believes with me, that there is one God only, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, I call on him to forsake the temples, where they have set up other objects of worship.

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